

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- 1                   1.     A computer configuration modification method comprising:  
2                   storing hardware configuration information comprising information regarding  
3 hardware configuration of a computer, a hardware contract renewal notification destination  
4 for the hardware of the computer, information regarding program configuration of the  
5 computer, and a program contract renewal notification destination for the program of the  
6 computer;  
7                   upon reception of a configuration modification request for the hardware  
8 configuration and program configuration of the computer to be modified, transmitting the  
9 information regarding the hardware configuration to be modified to the hardware contract  
10 renewal notification destination in order to modify the fee to be paid for the modified  
11 hardware, and transmitting the information regarding the hardware configuration to be  
12 modified and the information regarding the program configuration to be modified to the  
13 program contract renewal notification destination in order to modify the fee to be paid for the  
14 modified program; and  
15                  when license information transmitted from the program contract renewal  
16 notification destination is inputted, modifying the hardware configuration based on the  
17 information regarding the hardware configuration to be modified and modifying the program  
18 configuration based on the information regarding the hardware configuration to be modified  
19 and the information regarding the program configuration to be modified.
- 1                   2.     The computer configuration modification method according to Claim  
2 1, wherein the license information includes a license key, and wherein the hardware  
3 configuration and the program configuration of the computer are modified based on the  
4 license key.
- 1                   3.     The computer configuration modification method according to Claim  
2 2, further comprising making a determination as to whether or not to perform the  
3 configuration modification based on a period of validity comprised in the license key.
- 1                   4.     The computer configuration modification method of Claim 2, further  
2 comprising:  
3                   comparing the hardware configuration with the license key;

4                   if the license key contains a permissible hardware amount which is smaller  
5   than an actual hardware amount of the hardware configuration, then modifying a hardware  
6   amount used by the program of the computer to the permissible hardware amount indicated  
7   by the license key; and  
8                   if the license key contains a permissible hardware amount which is greater  
9   than the actual hardware amount of the hardware configuration, then modifying a hardware  
10   amount used by the program of the computer to the actual hardware amount of the hardware  
11   configuration.

1                   5.     The computer configuration modification method according to Claim  
2   1, wherein when the configuration modification is performed, the configuration of the  
3   program is modified based on the modified hardware configuration.

1                   6.     The computer configuration modification method according to Claim  
2   1, further comprising:  
3                   receiving billing information for the modified hardware and the modified  
4   program;  
5                   determining whether or not the hardware configuration and program  
6   configuration contained in the transmitted license information match with the modified  
7   hardware and modified program corresponding to the received billing information; and  
8                   if the hardware configuration and program configuration contained in the  
9   transmitted license information do not match with the modified hardware and modified  
10   program corresponding to the received billing information, then halting the configuration  
11   modification of the computer.

1                   7.     The computer configuration modification method according to Claim  
2   1, wherein the hardware configuration is modified when license information transmitted from  
3   the hardware contract renewal notification destination and license information transmitted  
4   from the program contact renewal notification destination are inputted.

1                   8.     In a computer readable medium containing a computer configuration  
2   modification program for modifying configuration of a computer, the computer configuration  
3   modification program comprising:  
4                   code for storing hardware configuration information comprising information  
5   regarding hardware configuration of a computer, a hardware contract renewal notification

6 destination for the hardware of the computer, information regarding program configuration of  
7 the computer, and a program contract renewal notification destination for the program of the  
8 computer;  
9 code for, upon reception of a configuration modification request for the  
10 hardware configuration and program configuration of the computer to be modified,  
11 transmitting the information regarding the hardware configuration to be modified to the  
12 hardware contract renewal notification destination in order to modify the fee to be paid for  
13 the modified hardware, and transmitting the information regarding the hardware  
14 configuration to be modified and the information regarding the program configuration to be  
15 modified to the program contract renewal notification destination in order to modify the fee  
16 to be paid for the modified program; and  
17 code for modifying the hardware configuration based on the information  
18 regarding the hardware configuration to be modified and modifying the program  
19 configuration based on the information regarding the hardware configuration to be modified  
20 and the information regarding the program configuration to be modified, when license  
21 information transmitted from the program contract renewal notification destination is  
22 inputted.

1 9. The computer configuration modification program according to Claim  
2 8, wherein the code for modifying comprises code for modifying the configuration of the  
3 computer based on a license key which is included in the license information.

1 10. The computer configuration modification program according to Claim  
2 9, further comprising code for determining whether or not to perform the configuration  
3 modification based on a period of validity comprised in the license key.

1 11. The computer configuration modification program according to Claim  
2 9, further comprising:  
3 code for comparing the hardware configuration with the license key;  
4 code for modifying a hardware amount used by the program of the computer  
5 to the permissible hardware amount indicated by the license key, upon determining that the  
6 license key contains a permissible hardware amount which is smaller than an actual hardware  
7 amount of the hardware configuration; and  
8 code for modifying a hardware amount used by the program of the computer  
9 to the actual hardware amount of the hardware configuration, upon determining that the

10 license key contains a permissible hardware amount which is greater than the actual hardware  
11 amount of the hardware configuration.

1 12. The computer configuration modification program according to Claim  
2 8, wherein the code for modifying comprises code for modifying the program configuration  
3 based on the modified hardware configuration when the configuration modification is  
4 performed.

1 13. The computer configuration modification program according to Claim  
2 8, further comprising  
3 code for determining whether or not the hardware configuration and program  
4 configuration contained in the transmitted license information match with the modified  
5 hardware and modified program corresponding to billing information for the configuration  
6 modification; and  
7 code for halting the configuration modification of the computer, upon  
8 determining that the hardware configuration and program configuration contained in the  
9 transmitted license information do not match with the modified hardware and modified  
10 program corresponding to the received billing information.

1 14. A computer configuration modification device comprising:  
2 a memory configured to store hardware configuration information comprising  
3 information regarding hardware configuration of a computer, a hardware contract renewal  
4 notification destination for the hardware of the computer, information regarding program  
5 configuration of the computer, and a program contract renewal notification destination for the  
6 program of the computer;  
7 means, upon reception of a configuration modification request for the  
8 hardware configuration and program configuration of the computer to be modified, for  
9 transmitting the information regarding the hardware configuration to be modified to the  
10 hardware contract renewal notification destination in order to modify the fee to be paid for  
11 the modified hardware, and transmitting the information regarding the hardware  
12 configuration to be modified and the information regarding the program configuration to be  
13 modified to the program contract renewal notification destination in order to modify the fee  
14 to be paid for the modified program; and  
15 means, when license information transmitted from the program contract  
16 renewal notification destination is inputted, for modifying the hardware configuration based

17 on the information regarding the hardware configuration to be modified and modifying the  
18 program configuration based on the information regarding the hardware configuration to be  
19 modified and the information regarding the program configuration to be modified.

1                   15.     The computer configuration modification device according to Claim  
2 14, further comprising means for modifying the configuration of the computer based on a  
3 license key which is included in the license information.

1                   16.     The computer configuration modification device according to Claim  
2 15, wherein the license key includes a period of validity for modifying the configuration of  
3 the computer.

1                   17.     The computer configuration modification device according to Claim  
2 15, further comprising:

3                   means, if the license key contains a permissible hardware amount which is  
4 smaller than an actual hardware amount of the hardware configuration, for modifying a  
5 hardware amount used by the program of the computer to the permissible hardware amount  
6 indicated by the license key, and if the license key contains a permissible hardware amount  
7 which is greater than the actual hardware amount of the hardware configuration, for  
8 modifying a hardware amount used by the program of the computer to the actual hardware  
9 amount of the hardware configuration.

1                   18.     The computer configuration modification device according to Claim  
2 14, further comprising:

3                   means for determining whether or not the hardware configuration and program  
4 configuration contained in the transmitted license information match with the modified  
5 hardware and modified program corresponding to billing information for the modified  
6 hardware and modified program; and

7                   means, if the hardware configuration and program configuration contained in  
8 the transmitted license information do not match with the modified hardware and modified  
9 program corresponding to the received billing information, for halting the configuration  
10 modification of the computer.

1                   19.     A computer configuration modification system comprising:  
2 a computer having a modifiable configuration;

3                   a hardware management system configured to perform billing in accordance  
4 with hardware configuration of the computer; and  
5                   a program management system configured to perform billing in accordance  
6 with the program configuration of the computer;  
7                   wherein the computer is configured, when a configuration modification  
8 request for the hardware configuration and program configuration of the computer is  
9 inputted, to transmit to the hardware management system information regarding the hardware  
10 configuration to be modified in order to modify the fee to be paid for the hardware following  
11 configuration modification, and to transmit to the program management system information  
12 regarding the program configuration to be modified together with the information regarding  
13 the hardware configuration to be modified in order to modify the fee to be paid for the  
14 program following configuration modification;  
15                   wherein the hardware management system is configured, when the  
16 information regarding the hardware configuration to be modified is inputted, to modify the  
17 fee to be paid for the hardware based on the hardware configuration information and to  
18 transmit hardware billing information to the computer;  
19                   wherein the program management system is configured, when the information  
20 regarding the hardware configuration to be modified and the information regarding the  
21 program configuration to be modified is inputted, to modify the fee to be paid for the  
22 program based on the hardware configuration information and program configuration  
23 information and to transmit program billing information to the computer; and  
24                   wherein the computer is configured, when the hardware billing information  
25 and the program billing information are inputted, to modify the hardware configuration based  
26 on the information regarding the hardware configuration to be modified and to modify the  
27 program configuration based on the information regarding the program configuration to be  
28 modified.

1                   20.    The computer configuration modification system according to Claim  
2 19, wherein the hardware configuration and the program configuration of the computer are  
3 modified based on a license key generated by the program management system.

1                   21.    The computer configuration modification system according to Claim  
2 20, wherein the license key includes a period of validity for modifying the configuration of  
3 the computer.

1                   22.     The computer configuration modification system according to Claim  
2     20, wherein the license key contains permissible hardware configuration and permissible  
3     program configuration, and wherein the computer is configured not to modify the hardware  
4     configuration and the program configuration if the hardware configuration and the program  
5     configuration corresponding to the billing information do not match the permissible hardware  
6     configuration and the permissible program configuration contained in the license key.

1                   23.     The computer configuration modification system according to Claim  
2     19, wherein the computer is configured to modify the program configuration based on the  
3     modified hardware configuration.